

[Chaco Period] Terena

rounded by a number of hunters and when the jaguar attempted to break through the circle of hunters he was speared, the hunter catching the jaguar on his spear in midair. Game was also caught within a circle of a grass fire. Pitfalls made on deer, peccary, and tapir trails were also widely used. For birds and smaller game, the Terena used deadfalls and a variety of loop snares fastened to bent-over saplings. Ducks were caught by swimmers diving and coming up under the birds or by surprising them at night in shallow water where they could be killed with sticks or stones. Dogs were used for tracking and in driving game to places selected for dispatching them.

When a man hunted alone, the game he killed was his. This game was later divided among the members of the household. In communal hunts the carcass belonged to the man who was able to kill the animal. The owner later divided the meat among the hunters.

The Terena used hunting magic consisting of certain plants which were believed to bring good luck to the hunter. Shamans were believed to know the kinds of medicines that brought good luck. Animal fat and salt were considered harmful to the hunter.

Meat was eaten boiled or broiled over hot coals. The Terena also used the earth oven for baking and roasting meats.

AGRICULTURE

The Terena selected their croplands near streams because the soils were richer and the moisture more adequate in the bottom lands. Care had to be taken not to plant a field in an area subject to summer floods. Brushwood fences were built to keep out wild pigs and domestic animals such as cattle and horses. Gourd rattles were sometimes used to frighten away birds. Magic was employed to keep away insects and other parasites.

Sánchez Labrador has the following to say about agricultural lands of the Chaná:

The greatest part of the territory consists of low lands, which are clayey during the rainy seasons. However, when the heat is intense water is extremely scarce and even drinking water cannot be found except near the Paraguay River or some other river which comes from the interior and runs amid trees. When water is scarce, the people move to places where water is plentiful and subsist on hunting and fishing. Before they leave their settlements they plant maize, gourds, cotton, tobacco, and

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family, as he was supposed to be able to successfully defend himself and the honor of his family.

If an unmarried girl acted immorally and was caught by her father, she was tied and dragged around the village for everyone to see. If she persisted in misbehaving she would be exiled by her relatives.

Incest does not seem to have been a capital crime. If sons and daughters committed incest they were beaten by their parents.

Theft was not common but if it occurred the two extended families usually settled the matter by returning the stolen goods or by compensation in the form of property.

If it was generally believed that a sorcerer had made one ill or had killed a relative by means of black magic, the sorcerer would be killed. The killing of the sorcerer had to be performed outside the village because if anyone killed a shaman in the village it was considered murder. Under these circumstances a man would wait until the sorcerer went hunting or went to cultivate his garden outside the village. If he succeeded in killing him the matter would end there. On the other hand, people feared shamans, for their relatives or other shamans would try to revenge the death.

The Terena stress the fact that there was little crime in the villages in the old days, the social unity of the village being strengthened by constant external danger and the moral authority of the war chief and the two moiety chiefs. The treatment of murder shows that the villagers did not leave punishment entirely to the extended families, but attempted to avoid feuds through the enforcement of the village law of death in battle.

The bonds which held the members of the village together and which gave cohesion to the classes were those of kinship. There were no clans. The moieties functioned primarily as ceremonial units. For general economic and political security an individual depended upon his kinsmen, both on his father's and mother's side.

KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

In the grandparents' generation there are two terms which are extended to siblings of grandparents, both maternal and paternal, and to their spouses. These two terms are *onju* for grandfather, and *onje* for grandmother.

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she has spells of nausea and is particular about her food. In general the mother of a young woman informs her about her condition. The Terena have two words for pregnancy, *ikaikóná* and *kochuecháti*. The Terena distinguish between a married man who is a father and one who is not, a father being called *imá* and a childless man, *máa*. [92]

In the past, infanticide and abortion were practiced. Whether this was an original Terena custom or was taken over from the Mbayá is not certain. As the Arawak-speaking Guaná did not practice infanticide there is a strong likelihood that the Terena took over this custom from the Mbayá. The explanation the Terena now give for infanticide is that it permitted a family to have male and female children alternately. If the first child was a boy, the second should be a girl and if a boy was born, he was put to death by being strangled at birth by the midwife. If a family had too many children, or if children were inconvenient, the expectant mother would go to a shaman who would make her drink a beverage prepared from certain roots. If this failed the mother might still have the child strangled. If a male child was due to survive, twins, if they were a boy and a girl, were accepted; but if both were boys one would be killed. Twins were due, they believed, to the fact that the mother had eaten double fruits. [197]

If the child was wanted, the mother, in the past, gave birth in her own home, attended by her mother or mother-in-law. Shamans were called only in cases of difficult birth. The husband must cut the umbilical cord, *uró*. As far as the Terena remember, no special knife was necessary to perform this act. The *uró* was later used as a charm in cases of difficult birth by being placed on the abdomen of a woman giving birth. In order to give birth the mother squatted on her heels, supporting herself by holding on to some stationary object. The midwife would massage her abdomen and assist in the removal of the child. The midwife then washed the child and gave it to the mother; she then rested for 6 days before resuming her duties. [847]

After the child was safely delivered the husband would go out in search of "palmito de bocaiuva" for his wife, for these palm shoots were believed to induce a bountiful supply of milk. It was the duty of the paternal grandfather to give a name [262] [824] 553 603

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A church wedding is usually followed by a party in which both relatives and friends participate. After being married the young couple go to live with the bride's parents, although this rule is no longer adhered to strictly.

BURIAL

When an adult person died, old people gathered at the house of the dead. Young people were not permitted to view or come near the corpse, as it was believed this could bring death to the young. Around the corpse the people placed all his belongings, clothes, tools, weapons, and ornaments. If anything were missing the ghost would return to claim his property.

After lamentations at the house, the corpse was wrapped in his or her clothes and carried to the cemetery some distance from the village; the corpse was placed in a grave on his back with the feet facing the west. This was done in order that the ghost, when freed from the body, could go to the Chaco. On the way to the graveyard a shaman would walk in front of the procession and as he reached the graveyard he would tell the other ghosts about whom they were going to receive. After the body was buried the shaman would be the last to leave the cemetery, his duty being to prevent the ghost from returning to the village.

After returning to the village, the relatives often burnt the house in which a deceased adult had lived. Sometimes, however, they were satisfied by changing the doorway of the house. The name of the dead person could not be uttered for several months. Members of the dead person's family would change their names. All this was done in order to confuse the ghost and to prevent it from returning to the living relatives. It was believed that if the ghost came back it would take a living relative back to the land of the dead.

The close female relatives of a dead man would remove their clothing and cut their hair as a sign of mourning. For a month after death they would wail at sunrise and sunset, sitting naked in their houses. The wife or mother of a dead man was supposed to show even more explicit signs of mourning. The widow, for instance, was not permitted to work or to bathe for many days. In addition, there were regulations which restricted freedom of widows and widowers. A widower was permitted to marry only a widow. If a man had

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is given. All Terena children are welcome at the Protestant school irrespective of the religious faith of their parents. Children receive medical attention if they are ill and report their illness to the missionaries. Boys and girls attend school together, the teachers insisting that each child be dressed in clean clothing. Outside of being kept in after school, there is no other form of punishment. [876]

The official Government school has an attendance of about 37 students. The wife of the manager of the Post acts as a teacher, with a Brazilian girl as an assistant. The curriculum is the same as at the Protestant school. The Terena prefer to send their children to the Protestant school because they believe they learn more and will finish the 4-year course of instruction. Pupils tend to leave the Government school as soon as they are able to read and write a little. The Protestant school also gives prizes to good students, consisting of articles of clothing and books. 648
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[895]

The Protestant missionaries have established schools in all the larger Terena villages. At Ipegue there is a school with 80 pupils and at Moreira a school with 50 pupils. The missionaries say that Terena children are industrious and learn rather quickly. Yet, they say that no Terena student has gone beyond the 4 years, even when they have an opportunity in some of the neighboring towns. Even at that, the present status of education among the Terena compares well with the prevalent illiteracy in the rural areas of Brazil. 797
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RELIGION

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

The old Terena believed in a "High God," *Itukovicke*, in the culture hero twins, *Yúrikoyu-vakái*, and in such evil spirits as *Vanónu*, *Voropi*, and *Hikáimú*. Insofar as all things were believed to have a soul the Terena can be said to have believed in animism. Magic was based on the belief that certain plants, animals, and inanimate objects possessed powers which could be used to bring about good or evil results. Shamanism was highly developed and the spirits of dead shamans were used by living shamans to influence the affairs of men. Ghosts of the dead were feared, as they were believed to cause death if permitted. 776
[774]
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bringing harm to the Indians. The shaman kept on singing. He kept on singing for a long time until *Vanónu's* voice became weaker and weaker and he stopped speaking altogether. When the rain ceased the shaman stopped singing.

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Another evil spirit who lives near water and brings storms is *Voropí*:

Voropí is a water spirit. He lives in a tree near the bank of a stream. He is a great serpent with a human face. He does not like human smell and if some person comes near his home he becomes very angry and sends heavy rain, and lightning flashes from his sides. When he is very angry he sends so much rain that people drown. *Voropí* does not like human hair and that is why the Indians in the Chaco pull out their eyebrows, their pubic hair, and why men pull out the hairs on their chins. Bathing in lakes and rivers makes *Voropí* angry.

Hihíaiuné is a female water spirit who lives in the rivers of the Chaco:

Hihíaiuné is a large serpent. She hates menstruating women and people who are mourning for the dead. A menstruating woman must remain indoors and on no account go to a lake or river to wash, for this would anger *Hihíaiuné* who would send the winds *seipoti* and *seipone* which in turn would bring heavy rains and floods. If a man should have contact with a menstruating woman, he too must avoid water for fear that a flood would destroy his house. To avoid sexual contact menstruating women paint themselves black.

The Terena believed, and still believe, that the affairs of men are directly influenced by spirits, not only by such as *Voropí*, *Vanónu*, and *Hihíaiuné* and the ghosts of the dead, but by the souls of living men, animals, plants, and inanimate objects. Sickness, misfortune, and death are caused by spirits and souls of the dead. On the other hand, success in war, hunting, fishing, farming, and love-making can be achieved through the assistance of these spiritual entities. People fear the ghosts of the dead, for they sometimes come back to take a relative or friend to the land of the dead. The ghosts of dead shamans are even more powerful in their influence over human life. The anger of *Voropí*, *Vanónu*, and *Hihíaiuné* are a threat to life and property. But in addition to these dangers, the souls of people may leave their living bodies or the souls of objects and animals may cause these objects or animals to enter the body, thus bringing about illness or death.

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SHAMANISM

Terena shamanism rests on the belief that the world of spirits, ghosts, and souls is open to human

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control. This control, however, cannot be exercised by everyone. A long period of training and the knowledge of secret rites is necessary before a person can get into touch with the spirit world. Although many Terena, in the past, practiced sympathetic and contagious magic, it was, however, only the shamans who could operate through the agency of spirits. A properly trained shaman, *koishimameti*, would fall into a trance and his soul would visit the ghosts of dead shamans, *Vorepi* and *Vanómu*, as well as be in contact with the souls of the living. Every shaman had a special spirit, usually the ghost of a dead shaman, at his service. This ghost would tell the shaman what he wanted to know and would also perform tasks demanded by the shaman. These spirits would appear to the shaman in the form of animals, snakes, or birds while the shaman was in a trance.

To call his special spirit helper a shaman painted his body and face with red and black circles and began to chant and dance. In one hand he held a gourd rattle, *itáaka*, and in the other a bunch of rhea feathers, *ki'pahé*. The *ki'pahé* looks like a feather duster with the handle cut off very short. When contact with the spirit is made the shaman puts his question or makes his request. The rite varies, of course, with the situation, a curing ceremony being different from one in which a lost object is to be discovered. These performances are customarily carried out at night.

The principal function of the shaman is to cure sickness. The Terena have two theories about illness, one that foreign objects enter the body, and second, that the soul of the sick person leaves the body. Foreign objects may be forced to enter the body either through witchcraft as practiced by some living person or by an evil spirit or ghost. Souls, too, are stolen by spirits and can be removed through witchcraft. The task of the shaman is to remove the injurious object or to return the soul to the body.

During a curing ceremony the patient would lie on the floor of a hut and the shaman would dance slowly around him chanting and shaking his gourd rattle. When the shaman fell into a trance and his spirit helper appeared, the spirit would ask, "Why have you called me?" The shaman would answer, "I have called you to tell me why this person is ill and to tell me how I can cure him."

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The spirit would then explain the cause of the illness and what the shaman should do. If a foreign object was causing illness the shaman would suck the painful part of the body, later removing the object from his mouth and showing it to the patient and those present. These objects were usually said to be pieces of bone, sticks of wood, or worms. If the soul had been removed the shaman's spirit helper would return it to the body of the patient. 756 755

Shamans were also called upon to cause illness. This the shaman did by dancing and chanting all night, calling on the soul of the person whom he wished to make ill. When the soul appeared before him the shaman would force the soul of a snake or frog to enter the bewitched person's body. The soul would remain in the power of the shaman and would do his bidding while the bewitched person became ill. [994] 756 75A

Injuries and some ailments the shamans are said to have cured by medicines made from roots and herbs. But in this case, too, the shaman's spirit helper informed the shaman what roots and herbs he should use. [787] 756 757

To discover the whereabouts of game, lost objects, and the location of enemy war parties, in the past, shamans would either send their spirit helpers to investigate and inform them or the shamans would find out for themselves by sending their own souls as scouts. 756 787

Shamans would also tell people how to prepare amulets and charms against dangers to the body, to fields, and to livestock, and how to prepare love medicines and to make charms to bring about success in hunting and fishing. These charms were effective, it was believed, because the shamans knew the properties of certain plants or inanimate objects which would bring about the results required. 756 789 132

An important function of Terena shamans was the selection and training of new shamans. Old shamans selected novices from among their children or other young people in the village who expressed their willingness to undertake the rigorous training required. A certain amount of seclusion and the avoidance of fat and salt was demanded for the novices. The initiation of novices usually took place during the annual shaman festival. The novice was given a small snake, bird, or plant which he was supposed to swallow. During [262] [263] [774] [787] 756

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the following night the novice was expected to have a dream in which the soul of the snake, bird, or plant appeared to him. As we have seen, the souls of these animals, birds, and plants were believed to be the ghosts of dead shamans who appeared in nonhuman forms. If the novice was successful in making contact with a spirit or ghost he would continue his training, for he now had a spirit helper. When the novice had learned all the myths, chants, rites, and magical lore, he was given the gourd rattle, *itáka*, and was considered a qualified shaman, *koikámaneti*. He was presented to the tribe during the annual festival of the shamans.

Once a year the shamans held a public performance, or festival, known as the *ohéo'koti*. This festival took place when the Pleiades had reached their maximum height in the sky. A month before this date the shamans gathered wild honey and prepared quantities of alcoholic mead in preparation for the ceremony. During this waiting period the shamans chanted together every night and told stories about their *uchéporoi*, or spirit helpers. Often the shamans would fall into a trance and remain as if dead, saying that their *uchéporoi* had called them into the spirit world. Just before the festival the shamans would build a special hut or shrine near the village called *penó-ohéo'koti*.

On the morning of the day fixed for the *ohéo'koti* the shamans would gather at their special hut accompanied by their novices. A fire would be lighted and the shamans would sit around it. One of the shamans, called *ivohákoti* (itchy one), would then stand up and turning toward the graveyard would shout "Wake up!" and call all the known dead by name. Then the shamans would begin to chant and beat their drums and march toward the village. When they entered the village they passed before each house. When they came before the house of a shaman they would stop, and the owner of the house would chant, shaking his gourd rattle, calling on his spirit helper to give him power.

If the shaman were successful or had the skill, he would perform certain miracles before his house to impress the villagers who were gathered around to observe the proceedings. He would make snakes, birds, and other objects come out of his mouth. He would, for instance, take a piece

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of meat from his mouth, blow on it until it took the form of a snake, later making it disappear into his mouth; or he would take a small plant from his mouth and by blowing on it make it grow into a large flowering plant, later making it diminish and disappear. 756
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This performance of miracles would continue before the house of each shaman. When this part of the *ohéo'koti* was completed the shamans withdrew to appear again dressed in red mantles called *haráramotóti*. Again they marched before each house stopping at the houses of the shamans where each shaman would give his colleagues the mead which he had prepared. After all the mead had been consumed the shamans retired and the *ohéo'koti* was finished for the season. 796
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Among the Terena, shamans had, in the past, a position of extraordinary prestige. This high status was due, no doubt, in part to their alleged power to cure, to discover lost objects, to assist in hunting, and to discover the location of enemy war parties, and, in part, to their alleged power to perform miracles. Besides participating intimately in the fundamental activities of social life, the shamans were the repositories and the transmitters of tribal lore and of origin myths and were the connecting link between the Terena and the supernatural world in which everyone believed. Above all, they were instrumental in bringing the people together at the time of the annual *ohéo'koti* during which both the living and the ghosts of the dead participated in observing the power of the shamans to control the world. 756
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PRESENT-DAY RELIGION

Although the Terena have been in contact with a Christian community for over a century and Protestant missionaries have been active in Bananal for about 35 years, shamanism is by no means dead. At Bananal there are, today, six shamans—four men and two women. The four men (Eperú, José, Sabino, and Brigido) were consulted. Eperú for instance, explained that he learned his shamanism from his father who was also a shaman. He said that although he does not have the power to perform miracles, such as making a "bicho" (a little animal) come out of his mouth, he has spirits with whom he can get into contact. These spirits are the ghosts of dead shamans. He calls the spirits at night when he wants them to help him. 756
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He calls them by name, shaking his *itdabé* and holding his *k'pabé*. If people are present he makes them close their eyes while he is calling the spirits. "*Giabi kaponé neishé somori*" (Come to me, look at me), he says. This request, twice repeated, is enough to make the spirits come to him. He then makes his wishes known to the spirits. When he is in contact with the spirits he claims he is in a trance. During trances Eperú says he sometimes visits the Chaco, the place where *Voropé* lives. He says that shamans who get in contact with *Voropé* are able to control rain. On coming out of the trance he tells people where he has been and with whom he has spoken.

When he is curing, the spirits tell him what to do, how to suck the objects out of the patient's body, or what roots and herbs to use. If a snake has bitten a person, he sucks the wound. He says that when a shaman learns how to cure certain diseases, he does not always have to consult the spirits.

Another shaman, Sabino, is said to be able to perform miracles just like the old Terena shamans. People claim that they have seen Sabino make "bichos" come out of his mouth. One of the female shamans is said to be visited by a jaguar spirit. No one has seen the jaguar spirit but they have heard it speaking with the shaman at night.

In addition to the six shamans just mentioned, there are two Indians, Feliciano and Japão, who are said to cure people by blessing them in the Christian fashion. They learned to ask help from the saints when they worked on Brazilian fazendas. These two men, although considered shamans, use Christian saints instead of the ghosts of shamans.

It appears, therefore, that the Terena have adopted Christian beliefs and fitted them into their own pattern of religion. On the other hand, the Brazilians use Terena shamans. Colonel Horta Barbosa, who is in charge of the Indian reservations in this part of Brazil, stated that there are still many active Terena shamans and that one of the female shamans has many Brazilian clients. These "customers" would come long distances to consult her about sickness, lost objects, and matters concerning their personal life. The colonel said that he has no objection to shamanism, but he did object to the Brazilians bringing cane rum to the reservations.

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Shamanism is still an important part of Terena belief. The Terena still speak with awe of their famous shamans who, in the past, performed great miracles. In a sense, these old shamans have become legendary culture heroes, symbols of Terena unity and past greatness. Although they admit that present-day shamans do not have as much power as the shamans of old, they believe that the shamans of today can cure sickness and can demonstrate their powers. Many Terena, although members of either the Catholic or Protestant church, attend shamanistic performances. An interesting feature of present shamanism and one which shows Christian influence is the fact that some of the shamans attach a cross to the handle of the *ki'pahé*. In addition, the *ohéo'koti* is given on the 19th of April, the internationally recognized "Indian Day." Thus while Terena shamanism may have lost much of its meaning in competition with Christianity and white man's medicines and technology, shamanism is, along with the Terena language, a strong link with the past, an element which is still specifically Terena and one which gives the Terena a feeling of social and cultural unity.

Although the Terena have no clear record of missionary activity among the tribe from the date of their arrival in Brazil until about 1910, personal histories show that many old Terena were baptized and considered themselves Christians. We know that before the establishment of the Post, the Terena worked on the fazendas and that the Catholic fathers wandered from farm to farm in their official capacity, baptizing, marrying, and holding religious services even as they do in Mato Grosso today. Terena farm laborers, therefore, came under the influence of the "padres" quite early and it is most likely that the priests visited Terena villages from their headquarters in Campo Grande, Miranda, and Aquidauana. Although no statistics exist, it is more than probable that most, if not all, of the Terena were nominally Christians by 1900.

In 1910 a number of English Protestant missionaries, belonging to the Inland South American Missionary Union, visited the Terena led by Henry Whittington, who, in 1913, returned to establish the first permanent mission at Bananal. Along with his missionary activities, Whittington began teaching the Terena children to read and write

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The social tensions arising out of the competitive nature of Catholic and Protestant missionary activity among the Terena is something which both Protestant and Catholic missionaries deplore and something which causes considerable anxiety to the officials of the Brazilian Indian Service. For some time there has been an understanding between Catholics, Protestants, and the Brazilian Government that when Protestants go into a new area first the Catholics should stay away from that area. Similarly when the Catholics have opened up a new region in the interior the Protestants should remain away. This rule, however, either was not in effect or was not adhered to in the case of the Terena. At present, of course, the rule would be difficult to enforce among the Terena because the two creeds are well entrenched among the people. The tension between the Protestant and Catholic sects, however, would decrease if the Catholic and Protestant missionaries ceased in their efforts to convert individuals from one creed to the other and accepted the "status quo."

Moreover, the presence of shamanism in the religious life of the Terena cannot be forgotten. As matters now stand there appears to be a threefold struggle for allegiance between Catholicism, Protestantism, and shamanism. Shamanism, as we saw, is no longer pure paganism, having adopted elements of Christianity. The outcome of these differences in belief will, it seems, depend on the nature of the future development of Terena social life. If left to themselves in a Catholic country the Terena may overcome these differences by eventually developing a type of Catholicism with a strong admixture of shamanism.

SECULAR ENTERTAINMENT

DANCES AND GAMES

The important dances of the Terena today are the *kóhi-shoti-kipahé* (called "bate-pay" by Brazilians) and the *ohéo'hoti*. Although these dances now reveal Brazilian elements, the Terena consider them as Terena dances and distinguish them from ordinary Brazilian dances, horse races, foot races, and other forms of secular entertainment in which they participate on saints' days and public holidays.

While they lived in the Chaco, the Terena had many dances and games which they still remember,

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explain that this game was a form of training for war.

Later in the autumn season, when the Pleiades were high in the sky, the *ohéo'koti*, or shaman dance, was performed. As this dance is directly connected with shamanism, it was described under that heading. The next ceremonial act was the performance of the *chúkuchú*, or "tadique" as it is called in Portuguese. This game is still played by the Caduveo and appears, in the past, to have had a wide distribution in the Chaco.

The *chúkuchú* was, in fact, a contest between the members of the two moieties and was customarily played shortly after the *ohéo'koti*. Each moiety chief, *unati ashé*, put on his short ceremonial *shiripé* and numerous necklaces and painted his face black and white. The two chiefs would then sit down cross-legged facing each other in the village plaza. Each held in his lap a small drum, *póoku*, made by stretching a coati skin over a clay pot, and in his hand a *kali-itáka*; each chief was surrounded by the adult members of his moiety.

When the chief commenced to sing, the contest began. Small groups, equal in number, were selected from each side and began a mock fight, trying to knock each other down. It was customary for the members of the *unati* to begin, the commoners coming later, and even the women participated in the final stages of the contest. The game consisted in each man or woman trying to knock down his or her opposite number. In this fight only bare hands could be used and it appears to have been something like a boxing match. While the mock battle was on the chiefs continued to sing, beating their drums with one hand and shaking their gourd rattles with the other. When all members of one side had been knocked down, another group was selected. The winners were always loudly cheered by their respective moieties. After the mock fight was finished the winners would be lauded and the feasting and drinking would begin, each moiety eating apart from the other.

In the past, then, the *kochúvonunéti*, *piritúti*, *ohéo'koti*, and the *chúkuchú* were the principal dances and games performed during the harvest season. This does not mean, however, that the Terena did not perform ceremonials at other times of the year. Marriages, puberty ceremonies, and events connected with succession of chiefs were

2: Oberg E-5 (1946-1947) 1949 SK7 Guana SK7
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PLATE 8.—Terena dancer and woman. c, "Bato-pau" dancer dressed in river birdskins. b, Woman with half beaks (vulva) and all'pau (from feather headdress).

[End Plate 8]

[P.80]

2: Oberg

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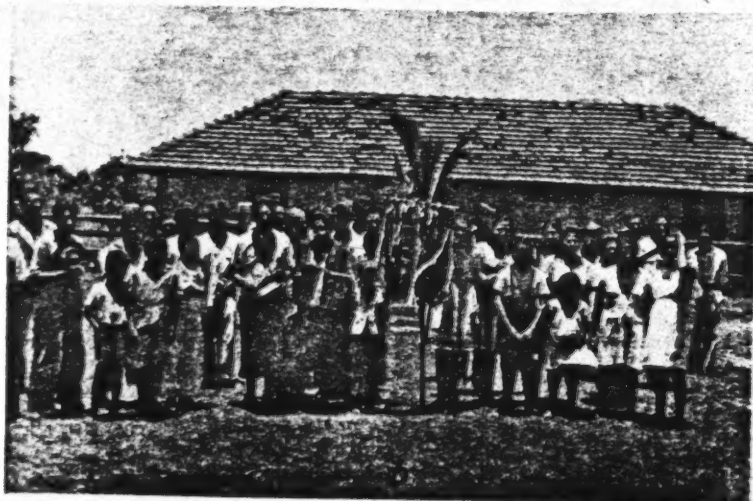


PLATE 10.—The old and the new religion of the Terena. a, Shaman dancing around sick man. b, St. Sebastian Day procession with decorated house.

[End Plate 10]

[P. 82]

[Traditional Culture]

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These ceremonies, which
 seem to have been a mixture of religious and secular rituals--
 such as the Oheokori, to which we have already referred--have
 as their central figure the Koixomuneti or doctor-sorceter,
 who, wielding a gourd rattle (Itaaká) and a tuft of feathers
 (Kipahê) invokes /52/ the spirits of the dead or Koipihapati
 and through them effects cures, pacifies the forces of nature,
 and performs all sorts of exorcisms. (86)

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86. Although today the
 activity of the Koixomuneti
 is much more limited and
 his prestige much less, we
 can get an idea of his im-
 portance among the Guanã
 groups, especially among
 the Terêna, by studying
 certain myths, such as
 "Ivoióneti." (Cf. Altenfelder,
 1949.)

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The importance of these annual festivities to Terêna
 society--aside, of course, from their manifest function (87)--.

87. The concepts of
 manifest function and
 latent function are used
 here after Robert Merton
 (1951:61-64).

becomes clear when we analyze the role of that ceremonial
 complex in the maintenance of tribal solidarity and the
 strengthening of group consciousness, or, in other words, its
 [462] latent function. The preparations made by the community
 are so intensive that they demand the participation of the

Terena

Brazi/SLI

/69 cont. /

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master unless the new one assumes responsibility for the debt or indemnifies him at once. And, if he dares to run away, he almost invariably runs the risk of suffering vexations, blows, and not infrequently death, the police being in every case a participant in such outrages." (Ibid.)

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Incidentally, we heard from the Terêna a large number of stories which corroborate, with a wealth of details, these observations relating to 1904. In Cachoeirinha, for example, we met old Xuri, a doctor-sorcerer staying temporarily in the community, who had been born in the above-mentioned Cutape fazenda, and who had been a witness to the vicissitudes his people had undergone as they were exploited on the regional labor market.

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"A curious thing," the report goes on. -- "In the povoados /settlements/ and in the towns the police are always in the hands of the fazendeiros themselves, who are the authorities, either as justices of the peace, or as deputies or sub-deputies /delegados or sub-delegados/. The soldiers are enlisted by them and from then on regarded as their own camaradas. It is the fazendeiros who furnish them with provisions and give them their pay and their marching rations. The soldiers work for them as vaqueiros and farmers, and do any task that the fazendeiro, as a police official, may order them to do. -- There can be no supervision against these abuses, because there is true solidarity among the rich men who take turns in this usufruct." (131)

S:Oliveira--103b

E-5,4 (1955-1958) 1960

SK7 Guana SK7

Layâna

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Gonçalo, a Layâna survivor and the most highly regarded
Koixomuneti in Cachoeirinha. (1955)

3:Oliveira--103c

E-54 (1955-1958) 1960 SK7 Guana SK7

Layana

/12b/

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Gonçalo at "work." (1955)

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participation in activities of
 this sort very difficult.

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It is true that these variables are significant to an understanding of the survival of these "games," and also (in terms of the same mechanisms) for the study of certain cultural complexes still in force in the old aldeas, such as the traditional forms of burying the dead (with all of their belongings), the use of kinship terms, or the peculiar sexual division of labor, all of these complexes having disappeared from the communities of the second (b) group, as well as from those of multiple

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ethnic composition. But it cannot be said that such variables have the same importance for the analysis of the magico-religious rituals organized by the Koixomuneti. Wherever there is a Koixomuneti--and they are spread through all the aldeas and even in the cities, as we shall see below--the rituals are carried out, their "results" varying of course (according to the testimony of the Terêna) with the mastery of magical

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practices possessed by their agents. What can be said is that the old Oheokoti, heralded--as we saw in Chapter III--by the appearance of the Pleiades, today has practically disappeared, replaced as it has been by the basically Catholic activities of Holy Week. Nevertheless, there are indications that up to 1955 (!), in Bananal, the Oheokoti was performed with some regularity in its traditional form, i.e., with the magico-religious ceremonies followed by the activities of the Yanakalu, by the collective meal, and concluded with the Mootó. (186)

186. The informants, in Bananal, told us that it is becoming increasingly difficult to gather participants, and that on the last occasion they managed to get only ten individuals, counting old and young.

/116 cont. /

178 Now, in Cachoeirinha, the last time when a complete
796 Oheokoti ceremony was performed was in 1915, judging from
the information gathered in the aldeia that gives this /117/

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524 date as that of the last Mootó. Since then, the collective
Mootó has become an individual affair: when a Xumono
Terena--for example--aware of his skill as a fighter, invited
a Sukirikionó to a "fight," and the latter accepted, they were
both probably more inclined to revive an ancient source of
prestige than to foster a ceremony connected with religious
rituals, although secular /in itself/. Today, it can be said,
the Oheokoti has been much simplified, in spite of the fact
that the term is still in force as a general designation for the
magico-religious ceremonies performed by the Koixomuneti.

178 Nevertheless, it is also necessary to differentiate from the
796 usual shamanistic rituals (performed with the sole purpose of
256 healing diseases and warding off evil), those ceremonies
276 directed to the "guardian spirits" of the Koixomuneti. Each
255 Koixomuneti has his Koipihapati-Koixomuneti, i.e., the
287 spirits of dead doctor-sorcerers who, in life, enjoyed great
prestige in the community, and, in some cases, got to be
teachers of the Koixomuneti, who receives him /sic/ on
specific days. (187) It is to these magico-religious ceremonies
that the name Oheokoti is given at the present day.

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187. These days may or may
not coincide with Holy Week,
although Good Friday is the
day most fitting for the
Oheokoti. Several of the
Koixomuneti told us that
they "work" on this day,
among them the late
João Grande, of Cachoeirinha,
"Oongó," the aunt of the
"Captain" of Bananal, and
old Juliana, who lives in

/117 cont. /

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Campo Grande. All of them were characterized by their great age, especially João Grande, perhaps the oldest of all, who died in 1957 at the age of approximately 100.

that the name Oheokoti is given at the present day.

177 Although these ceremonies still take place in all of the
 178 Terêna communities, they seem to have been much modified
 755 in their internal structures. They now present intrusive Catholic
 756 and spiritualist elements, which make them a living example
 771 of religious syncretism: the Koixomuneti call themselves
 796 Catholics, wear medals and hang pictures of saints on the walls of their "ranchos," while at the same time their practices show spiritualist influences, due to the contact they maintain with the so-called "low spiritualism" of the cities. It is frequently heard that "spiritualism is getting into the aldeia" and that the
 [612] present Koixomuneti "are not as good as the old ones." In short, it can be said that in spite of all the modifications undergone by the Oheokoti--or perhaps, due to the same, since they made him more flexible--, he continues to survive and to fulfill his integrating function, or, in other /118/ words, as we already said, to foster tribal solidarity and strengthen the ethnic consciousness of all of the Terêna local groups, succeeding in attracting even the individuals who live in the cities.

178 This flexibility shown by the Oheokoti had no parallel
 571 in the traditional social structure. This is the reason why the
 [172] latter broke down, without resisting the changes operating in the regional scene, when the Terêna communities were compelled to resist the expanding front of Brazilian society. As we saw in Chapter III--and as we are merely recalling here--, the extraordinary rigidity of Guaná-Terêna social structure, made up of the combination of a three-fold asymmetrical

3:Okveira--196a

E-5,4(1955-1958) 1960

SK7 Guana SK7
Terena

/136a/

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Young Terêna, Koixomuneti apprentice, wearing around his neck an image of the "Sacred Heart." (Cachoeirinha, 1955)

for the absorption of the individual into the dominant, ethnically diverse group, as we shall see below.

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Turning now to Terena Social Structure, it can readily be analyzed as being composed of two distinct and socially superimposed groups, the captive group (Kauti) and the dominant tribal group (Terena). The latter in its turn is divided into two groups: the first that of the chiefs and their relatives, called Naati; the other that of the common men, the "people", called Waheré-Txané. The first of these names comes from the word Unati meaning *good*. The second can be analyzed etymologically to mean *worthless people* (Waheré—worthless, Txané—people), but its connotation gives it the sense of *common people*. As can be seen, there are two types of stratification, the ethnic and the social, which accords well with the theory of Thurnwald (cited by Baldus and Willems, 1939, under the item *Social Stratification*). The result, as diagrammed in Figure I, was the appearance of a threefold asymmetrical structure, which is a basic characteristic of the Terena social system.

2. Dual Division: Moieties

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The Terena (but not the Kauti) are further divided into two groups, never spatially separated, called Sukirikionó and Xumonó. These have the same social standing and are therefore linked in a network of symmetrical relationships. The stratification process which determined the formation of a threefold asymmetrical structure above, has no place here. It is possible, however, to make a differential analysis of the roles played by the members of each moiety, particularly during the Oheokoti ceremonies.

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These ceremonies began with a series of shamanistic rites and ended with secular ritual. The principal figure was the Koixomuneti or witchdoctor, known also as "Padre". At the appearance of the constellation called Seven Stars (Pleiades), or better when it had reached its zenith, usually in April, the feasts in honor of the dead were held, and at the same time the harvest was begun. Following the magico-religious rites there was a ceremonial gathering—in of the crops directed by Yanakalu, a member of the Xumonó moiety completely costumed and masked. In company with the people, he goes from house to house indicating with a staff the items needed for the banquet. At the end of the feast the Xumonó begin to torment the Sukirikionó, who feign indifference to it all. After a bit, however, opportunity is given for a reaction. The two moieties group into opposing lines for the "game" called Mootó. They trade punches back and forth, although care is taken to confine the fighting to appropriate age and sex groups.